



**The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency enforces strict regulations on polluted stormwater. The City faces potential fines of up to \$37,500 per day if we cannot show progress towards eliminating at least 750 million gallons of polluted water discharged into the Conestoga River. To recover the costs of services the City is mandated to provide, the City has adopted a stormwater management fee—an equitable, fair and low-cost solution.**

Revenue raised through the fee would be specifically dedicated to important infrastructure repairs and improvements that will not only help avoid Federal fines, but also make Lancaster a healthier and greener place to live.

**Why does the City need to deal with stormwater?** Older cities like Lancaster have a *combined sewer system*—water from storm runoff and our commercial and household sewage are carried together to the city's treatment plant in the same underground pipes. During heavy storms, the capacity of the treatment plant is overwhelmed and this polluted rain/sewage mix is dumped directly into the Conestoga River without being treated. Parts of the City have separated sewers, where stormwater running off of hard surfaces picks up oil, litter, pet waste, and other pollutants and carries them directly to our streams.

Federal environmental regulations limit the quality and quantity of runoff that flows into our streams, and the EPA has recently increased scrutiny to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Lancaster is already facing fines of up to \$37,500 per day if we continue to dump this polluted mix of stormwater and sewage.

**What is the City doing to fix this?** Lancaster is working to ensure the existing infrastructure maximizes the capture and treatment of wet weather flows at the wastewater treatment plant, and has invested more than \$30 million since 2001. Additionally, the city is investing in new **green infrastructure** projects throughout the city to reduce the polluted runoff and catch the water *before* it enters the sewer system.

**What exactly is Green Infrastructure?** Green infrastructure uses natural systems to manage or treat rainwater where it falls, allowing water to soak into the ground, evaporate into the air or collect in a rain barrel or cistern. There are many types of green infrastructure technologies. These include tree canopies, native shrubs, green roofs, rain gardens, porous pavement, stone infiltration beds, rain barrels and cisterns.

**Why not just expand the treatment plant to handle these overflows?** Enlarging the treatment plant and building holding tanks to store the mixed stormwater and sewage would cost the City an estimated \$300 million to build and another \$750,000 each year for treatment. The city's Green Infrastructure Plan is estimated to cost \$140 million to keep the same volume out of our streams, saving the city over \$160 million.

The beauty of the Green infrastructure approach is that it will not only save the City millions of dollars in important infrastructure improvements, but the planned projects will make Lancaster a greener, cleaner, more vibrant city in which to live and visit.

Newly renovated Brandon Park Basketball courts and Parking lot



There are over 100,000 sq. feet of green roofs in Lancaster City.



**Why is green infrastructure good for Lancaster?** The planned projects will have significant environmental, social and economic benefits for the City. Studies show that green infrastructure brings about cleaner air and water; reduced energy use; greener streets, parks, and recreational areas; increased property values; healthier, happier people and even less crime. **For more information on these benefits, visit [www.saveitlancaster.org](http://www.saveitlancaster.org)**

#### WHAT IS AN IMPERVIOUS SURFACE?

An impervious surface refers to any surface that water cannot soak into: asphalt (streets), concrete (sidewalks), highly compacted crushed stone and gravel, and rooftops. When water cannot soak into the ground, it either sits in one place or moves along to a place where it can soak into the ground or be collected. As it moves along these hard surfaces it gathers pollutants like trash, oil, brake dust, fertilizer, salt and pet waste.

Approximately 50% of Lancaster City is covered by impervious surfaces.

**How was the fee developed?** The Stormwater Management Fee (SWMF) is the result of two years of study, recommendations, and hard work by Lancaster's Green Infrastructure Advisory Committee (GIAC). GIAC members include business owners, citizens, institutions, environmental groups, state government, and Lancaster city and county government.

The committee was charged with reviewing green infrastructure and funding options. They evaluated three approaches: a dedicated property tax, an increase in sewer fees, and impervious area-based stormwater management fee. **The GIAC concluded that the impervious area based fee was the most equitable and fair solution because fees are based on how much runoff is actually generated from each property.**

**How will the fee be used?** The fee will be placed into a dedicated fund used only for the stormwater management program. It will cover costs associated with improved operation and maintenance of existing stormwater systems, such as catch basin cleaning/repair and street sweeping, and capital improvements such as: green streets, sidewalks, and alleyways; green parking lots; green roofs; downspout disconnection; rain gardens; rain barrels; tree planting; and green parks. For more specific projects, please visit [www.saveitlancaster.org](http://www.saveitlancaster.org).

**750 million gallons**

The amount of polluted runoff the city must save each year

**\$37,500**

The amount Lancaster could be fined each day if progress is not made

**\$160 million**

The amount Lancaster can save by implementing green infrastructure projects

**\$12**

The amount an average homeowner will pay per quarter to address the stormwater problem

### **What are the benefits of a Stormwater Management Fee?**

*It's fair:* all contributors to stormwater runoff share the costs of maintaining and improving the storm drainage system.

*It's stable:* ensures that stormwater management receives adequate financial support, independent of City taxes.

*It's restricted:* revenues must be used solely for stormwater management.

**Who will pay?** The fee will be paid by all property owners in the City of Lancaster whose property has *impervious surfaces* such as roofs, driveways, sidewalks, walkways, and roads.

**How much will the fee be for residential property owners?** Fees will be based on the average amount of impervious area on whatever category of property you own. The stormwater management fee for most single-family homeowners is approximately \$4-\$12 per quarter. Most multi-family residential property owners will pay approximately \$66 per quarter.

**How much will the fee be for commercial property owners?** A typical city commercial property will pay an average of \$237 per quarter.

**How will I be charged?** The SWMF will appear as a line item on your water and sewer bill.

**I rent my property. Will I have to pay the fee?** The Stormwater Management Fee Ordinance allows a property owner to delegate responsibility for the payment of the fee to a property management company or tenant(s) in the same way that responsibility for payment of water/sewer bills can be delegated. **If you currently require your tenant(s) to directly pay the water/sewer bill for your property, the SWMF will be added to their bill. Your tenant(s) will NOT be receiving a separate notification about the SWMF.** If you delegate payment responsibility to your tenant(s), please notify them about the SWMF so they are aware this fee will be charged on their water/sewer bill. While property owners can delegate responsibility to



A Lancaster City green roof.

their tenant(s), property owners are ultimately responsible for payment of the SWMF bill if the tenant fails to pay the bill.

**Do tax exempt properties have to pay?** Yes, because it is a fee, not a property tax. Property taxes are based on the assessed value of the property. The SWMF is based on how much a property contributes to stormwater runoff.

**Are government-owned properties exempt?** All government owned properties will be assessed the stormwater management fee.

**Is the Stormwater Management Fee deductible from my federal or state income tax?** No. The SWMF is not deductible from Federal or State income taxes.

**I own land with no impervious surface. Do I have to pay a fee for that?** No, because there is no impervious area associated with your property.

**Do I have to pay for any unoccupied properties that I own?** Yes, if the property contains impervious area because stormwater continues to be generated from this property.

**Is there a way to reduce my fee? Yes. Lancaster's stormwater management fee program will include rebates and credits.** Rebates provide one-time assistance to offset the cost of construction for installing green infrastructure. Credits are an annual percent reduction in the stormwater management fee for having and maintaining green infrastructure. The process and deadlines for applying for credits and rebates will be defined as the program is rolled out.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.SAVEITLANCASTER.ORG](http://WWW.SAVEITLANCASTER.ORG) OR CALL THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AT 291-4739**